

she craves

The Short List: SLC Eats [Downtown]



People can think what they want about this adopted city of mine. We, like Buffalonians and Oaklanders, travel beyond our city limits with stereotypes and a barrage of lame jokes. The reality is, Salt Lake City is a bit of secret. Some of us like to keep it that way (those who already think there are enough California refugees in state limits) and some who love to preach the affordable cost of living, gorgeous landscape and the fact that not everyone is "of the faith."

I often tell my baffled out-of-state friends to think of SLC (all cities seem to have a hip or diminutive moniker, NYC, Sac-Town, Philly...) as a Chicago. A cultural — and in Utah's case, a political — capital surrounded by perceivably less enticing realms. The only difference: Red rock is infinitely cooler than acres of government subsidized corn.

Thanks to a variety of factors, we are a surprisingly diverse lot on this blue island in a very politically red sea. And despite the officializing of Jell-O as the state food, we regularly consume other cuisines. Some are of the innocuous chain variety. But a good deal are local endeavors that feature talented chefs, local products and even — get this — alcohol. Private club laws that plagued the city have gone the way of the covered wagon. I'll drink to that.

My day job means that I get to troll much of the state in search of the best molé, tom kha ga, frites, hand made pasta, micro brews, wine lists, pastries and more. I often get asked for dining recommendations through the day job, my work with Slow Food Utah and this blog. It's safe to say that downtown SLC has a high concentration of the good eats, all within walking distance of the public transportation. I even urge locals to use since parking is a nightmare. Plus, Trax trains are free within the downtown area.

So, for curious readers and soon-to-be travelers, I offer what I consider my shortlist of good, interesting Downtown SLC eats. [NOTE: This is by no means a comprehensive list of what I dig in the state. For advice beyond city limits, i.e. if you have a car to take you into other neighborhoods and cities, contact me. I'd love to dish.]

For another perspective on the City of Salt, check out this thoughtful blog from a fantastic writer and food-lover.

Tipica ... A Caputo Project [314 W. Broadway, 801.328.0222, www.tipicacaputo.com]

This is what happens when Tony and Matt Caputo join forces with chef Adam Kreisel. The beloved deli transforms to an urban space like that of Clark Lewis in Portland, OR. The menu is concise shaped by seasonal ingredients and a cadre of risotto, pasta, and incredible vegetable sides. The wine list is just as intriguing and concise making decision making an easier, less stressful task. Wednesday through Saturday, the Northern Italian inspiration runs rampant at dinner with Piemontese beef and porcini ragout over fresh pasta or emerald green strands of slurpable bucatini spiked with pureed arugula, tarragon and the intense shred of 2-year old Parmigiano Reggiano cheese.

For dessert, Caffè d'Bolla makes an appearance with its venerable gelato (Utahns, like Italians, take their ice cream seriously. I don't know why it's taken this long for gelato to become popular here) as does an incredible selection of cheese from the award-winning market and the handmade Chocolatier Blue chocolates.